

Message Text

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73

ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 5229

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJ: DEVELOPING ELECTORAL SCENE

REF: BA-5191

1. SUMMARY: THERE IS WIDESPREAD SPECULATION THAT PERON WILL MEET WITH BALBIN DURING NEXT FEW DAYS TO DISCUSS CANDIDACY. INTRANSIGENTE LEADER OSCAR ALENDE HAS ALREADY SAID HE WILL NOT RUN AND THERE ARE INDICATIONS MANRIQUE MAY ALSO CHOOSE TO ABSTAIN, THUS PERHAPS LEAVING PERON-BALBIN SLATE (IF THAT IN FACT TURNS OUT TO BE THE TICKET) WITHOUT REAL OPPOSITION. SOME SPECIALISTS IN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW BELIEVE THAT IN THAT CASE CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR ELECTIONS IN EVENT ABSENCE OR INCAPACITY OF PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT WOULD HAVE BEEN SATISFIED AND CONGRESS COULD DECLARE UNOPPOSED SLATE TO BE WINNER. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY'S PERONIST SOURCES, WHO HERETOFORE HAD TENDED TO PLAY DOWN IDEA OF BALBIN'S CANDIDACY, ARE NOW BEGINNING TO MOVE TO POSITION THAT MAYBE HE WILL IN FACT BE PERON'S RUNNING MATE. BOTH PERONIST AND UCR CONTACTS ARE PREDICTING MEETING BETWEEN TWO LEADERS DURING NEXT FEW DAYS TO NEGOTIATE MODALITIES OF
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CANDIDACY AND HOW TO SLICE UP PIE. ONE STICKY PROBLEM IS THAT

PERON OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT WISH PUBLICLY TO OFFER CANDIDACY TO BALBIN ONLY TO SEE LATTER FORCED TO TURN IT DOWN BY ADVERSE VOTE IN COMING UCR CONGRESS (WHICH PROBABLY WILL BE HELD JULY 30). BALBIN, ON OTHER HAND, CANNOT EVEN ASK HIS PARTY'S APPROVAL UNTIL PERON HAS PUBLICLY OFFERED IT. THIS POTENTIAL IMPASSE COULD BE EASILY OVERCOME, HOWEVER, IF BALBIN PRIVATELY INDICATES TO PERON THAT HE WILL ACCEPT THE CANDIDACY NO MATTER HOW THE VOTE GOES IN THE PARTY CONGRESS (SEE REFTTEL).

3. IF PERON AND BALBIN DO IN FACT BECOME PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT, RESPECTIVELY, FACTS THAT ONE IS 77 AND OTHER 69 AND THAT NEITHER IS IN GOOD HEALTH WILL MAKE NEXT SLOT IN ORDER OF SUCCESSION, I.E. PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT OF SENATE, A KEY POST. THAT PERON IS ALREADY TAKING THAT INTO CONSIDERATION IS SUGGESTED BY FACT THAT SENATE JULY 18 ACCEPTED RESIGNATION FROM THIS POST OF ALEJANDRO DIAZ BIALET, WHO YESTERDAY RETURNED TO ARGENTINA FROM ABROAD. SAID RESIGNATION, IT HAS NOW BEEN ANNOUNCED, WAS SUBMITTED JUST PRIOR TO LATTER'S DEPARTURE FOR MADRID. ORIGINALLY, SPECULATION HAD BEEN THAT DIAZ BIALET WOULD SIMPLY REMAIN OUT OF COUNTRY ON SPECIAL DIPLOMATIC ASSIGNMENT UNTIL QUESTION OF SUCCESSION WAS SOLVED AND WOULD THEN RETURN TO RESUME DUEITS AS PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT OF SENATE. APPARENTLY HIS ECLIPSE IS TO BE OF LONGER DURATION. THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, JOSE ANTONIO ALLENDE, OF CORDOBA, IS ACTING IN DIAZ BIALET'S PLACE, BUT PRESUMABLY PERON WILL SHORTLY ENGINEER THE ELECTION OF A NEW SENATE PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT WITH AN EYE TO THE QUESTION OF FUTURE SUCCESSION. IN PASSING, IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT WHILE DIAZ BIALET'S DECLINE RESULTED FROM HIS REPUTATION AS A CLOSE CONFIDANT OF CAMPORA, HE REPRESENTS THE PERONIST RIGHT AND THUS IS CLOSER ON THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM TO LOPEZ REGA AND OSINDE THAN HE IS TO, SAY, PUIG AND VAZQUEZ. IN THIS GAME LABELS BECOME SOMEWHAT DECEIVING.

4. MEANWHILE, OSCAR ALENDE, HEAD OF THE INTRANSIGENTE PARTY AND THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF THE ALIANZA POPULAR IN THE MARCH ELECTIONS (HE PLACED FOURTH), ANNOUNCED JULY 18 THAT HE DEFINITELY WILL NOT RUN; RATHER HE INDICATED HIS POSITION WOULD BE ONE OF "POSITIVE ABSTENTION" IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL UNITY. THE CANDIDATE WHO PLACED THIRD, FRANCISCO MANRIQUE, IS ALSO CONFIDENTIAL

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REPORTEDLY THINKING OF ABSTAINING. SHOULD HE DO SO, THE FIELD WOULD BE LEFT CLEAR FOR THE NATIONAL UNITY TICKET--UNLESS AMERICO GHIOLDI OF THE PSD, OR SOME OTHER MINOR POLITICAL FIGURE, SHOULD INSIST ON RUNNING AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE. ASSUMING FOR A MOMENT THAT PERON AND BALBIN SHARE A TICKET AND THAT THEY SHOULD BE UNOPPOSED, IT MIGHT BE UNNECESSARY TO GO THROUGH THE FORMALITY OF HOLDING ELECTIONS. SOME JURISTS BELIEVE THE CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENT WOULD THEN HAVE BEEN SATISFIED

WITHOUT THE FORMAL STEP, SINCE AN UNOPPOSED SLATE WOULD IN
EFFECT HAVE WON WITHOUT THE CASTING OF BALLOTS. CONGRESS MIGHT
THEN SIMPLY DECLARE THAT SLATE THE WINNER.
KREBS

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